SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: Sir, the hon. Member is quite right that we are trying to promote cultural tourism. But having said that, Sir, there are nominal fees for Indian nationals which is Rs. 10 to world heritage site and Rs. 5 to another 116 monuments. Foreign nationals have to pay Rs. 250 to world heritage sites and Rs. 100 to other monuments. Only in the case of Agra is the fee higher because there is an additional amount of Rs. 500 charged as *pathkar* by the Agra Development Authority, which is not the case in other monuments. Sir, this debate has again been started by a letter which was received in the Cabinet Secretariat from the PMO to answer the hon. Minister. An inter-ministerial meeting was held by the Cabinet Secretariat where all the Secretaries were present how we could bring it at par. There are some problems, Sir. We, in the Archaeological Curvey, earn only about Rs. 53 crore from entry tickets, which is not at all enought for restoration, and conservation work, which goes beyond Rs. 200 crores approximately. In any case, this Rs. 53 crores is put in the Central deposit fund of the Ministry of Finance and we have no access to it. That means that the Rs. 10 ticket is being subsidised by the Government of India. There is a debate going on in our Ministry whether it would be fair to subsidise even the entry fee for foreign nationals who are not taxpayers in our country. Sir, we have raised these points. Wherever we are charging extra fee from the foreigners, we are adding some value-added services. I have made a comparative study. The countries like the United States of America. Europe, the United Kingdom, etc. which have a single entry fee, these entry fees are very, very high, anything from 50 USD or 15 Euros to 25 Euros or USD. If we were to increase the fee for the Indian citizens travelling to various monuments of our country, in our personal opinion it would discourage the Indian travellers and we want to encourage domestic tourism and if reduced further, which is already a minimal of Rs. 250 to world heritage site with value-added services. There are countries like Russia, Egypt and a lot of other developing countries.

Reduction of entry fee in heritage monuments

*203. SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Prime Minister has asked the Ministry to

evolve a mechanism to do away with the existing price of two tier entry fee in various heritage monuments for foreign and domestic tourists; and

(b) if so, what measures are being taken by her Ministry to reduce the entry fee for the foreign tourists as compared to that of Indian tourists?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) and (b) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

(a) and (b) The existing policy of deferential charges being levied for different services including entry fee in heritage monuments for foreign national was discussed in an Inter Ministerial Meeting, which was attended by the representatives of the Ministry of Culture. The Inter Ministerial Meeting recommended that the charges to foreigners and Indian citizens may be brought on par after obtaining necessary approvals. A final decision in the matter is not yet taken which have dual tariff. We are considering various other countries like SAARC and BIMSTEC but no final conclusions have been reached. This debate is going on in the Ministry.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Sir, the hon. Minister while coming to this point has once again pointed out about the maintenance of our world heritage sites and monuments. Sir, I am on the question of promoting tourism in this country, especially for getting more foreign exchange and also to encourage the Indian tourists. Sir, I am not in favour of increasing the fee for Indian tourists on par with the foreign tourists. But what I want is that the foreign tourists should be brought on par with the Indian tourists so that a large number of tourists come here and they carry our culture to other countries. I think Rs. 50 crores is nothing as far as the Government of India is concerned. That is the point to which I would like to bring home. They should know our culture, out identity, our heritage, our architecture, and that is the point, which you have to explain. Even the Government is spending hundreds of crores of rupees on publicity in foreign countries. But they do not want to give concession to the foreign tourists who are coming. This is the point I would like to know.

SHRIMAT AMBIKA SONI: Sir, we have written to the Ministry of Finance to create this fund which we earn from the ticket sale as a non-lapsable fund for the Archaeological Survey of India so that we could use this fund from ticket collection to restore the buildings. This has been supported by the Planning Commission. It rests with the Ministry of Finance. I am not at

all of a different view with the Member that we want to encourage tourism. I would like him to sit with me after the Question Hour and tell me in which country of the world do we get into monuments of world heritage status by paying such a paltry amount of Rs. 10/-.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Fix up some time. Fix up some time.

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: We are demeaning our monuments if we just allow Rs. 10/-, whereas for Indians, it is still a big amount. We are even considering for senior citizens, students, special days so that they could even be given half this amount. But, for foreigners, if you want -- this debate is going on -- you can give me your points, we can consider them as the debate progresses.

श्रीमती विप्लव ठाकुर: माननीय सभापति जी, मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से जानना चाहती हूं कि जो मंदिर archaeology के monuments हैं और जहां पूजा होती है, उनमें जो लोकल लोग जाते हैं, उनसे भी फीस चार्ज की जाती है। मैं मंत्री जी से बिलकुल सहमत हूं कि foreign tourist pay कर सकता है, वह होना चाहिए, लेकिन जैसे मैं एक उदाहरण देती हूं कि हिमाचल प्रदेश में मसरूर का एक टेंपल है, जहां पूजा होती हूं, लेकिन चूंकि वह archaeology में monument है, वहां भी लोकल लोगों को जाने के लिए फीस देनी पड़ती हैं तो क्या मंत्री जी इस बारे में कोई फैसला लेंगी कि लोकल लोगों को फीस न देनी पड़े, यह मैं जानना चाहती हूं।

श्रीमती अम्बिका सोनी: सर, यह बात सच है कि हिमाचल प्रदेश में rock carved temple sculputre मसरूर में पांच रुपए entry fee लागू की जाती है। कई जगहों पर Archaeological Survey के तहत हम जो मंदिरों की देखरेख करते हैं, वहां कुछ ही दिनों में पूजा की इजाज़त होती है, बाकी के दिनों में वहां tourists के लिए entry tickets लगते हैं, लेकिन यह बात जो ऑनरेबल मैम्बर ने कही है, मैं उस पर जरूर विचार करूंगी।

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Sir, I would like to inform the hon. Minister that these tourist attractions are definitely good. We expect tourists to come here, but, all over the world the tourist attraction places are well maintained, and if the Government of India does not have enough funds, I do not think we should reduce it to a level where the maintenance of these tourist places become a problem, and these tourists, who are coming from all over the world, especially, from developed world, I do not think the rates which the Government of India or the Department is charging, are so high. On the other hand, I would like to know from the hon. Minister what kind of subsidy the Government of India is giving for this. Supposing, they

are already giving crores of rupees for subsidies, how do we like to manage these heritage sites so that they are well maintained for hundreds and thousands of years more or they well be dilapidated. It is easy to say, 'reduce the rates'. But then, the Finance Minister, who is sitting here will tax all of us, who are not visiting that place. So, only those who are willing to visit have to pay for that kind fo maintenance.

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: It is a fact that increasingly numbers are going up of monuments which are preserved and conserved by the Archaeological Survey and by State Government's Archaeological Department. It is a matter of satisfaction that in the recent Budget the Finance Minister did marginally increase the Budgetary outlay of the Archaeological Survey. Sir, we have tried to involve public-private partnership in the preservation of monuments because there is no other way of doing this work. So we have started a National Cultural Fund where the Ministry of Finance has offered to give tax rebates and incentives to those who contribute sums for the preservation of monuments. To make it easier for corporate houses to preserve monuments, we have asked them to bring their own expertise and conservationists only under our overall supervision.

But, I am very sorry to say, the response is still not adequate and need more resources than what we have to maintain our monuments. Every hon. Member of Parliament wants some monument in his or her constituency to be looked after by the ASI. We have 3,776 monuments under the ASI. But, this is a very insignificant number considering the large amount of heritage which we need to conserve.

SHRI B.J. PANDA: Sir, would the hon. Minister clarify whether she is aware of many incidents, which have been reported in the media, of India citizens being harassed at these monuments, particularly Indian citizens from the North-East, on the ground that they might be foreigners? Also, it has been reported that often times people who don't hold the Indian Passport but are somewhat Indian-looking are not harassed. Now, is there any guideline that the Ministry issued, or is it left to the discretion of the gatekeepers? And, will she take steps to ensure that Indian citizens are not harassed at these monuments?

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: Sir, it is our constant effort and it is an on-going process. If it needs to be strengthened, we will strengthen that no indian citizen, or, for that matter, no visitor, is harassed at any of the

monuments he visit in India. Without any doubt in my mind, if there are some lacunae, some loophole, we will plug them. I have not heard of the incident which the hon. Member is talking about. I will find out. But, it is true that there are people who have an Indian appearance. They can be, sometimes, thought of as Indian citizens and pay a smaller fee. Sir, only yesterday, while I was preparing for this question, this matter came up that a citizen who was from our neighbouring country and looks like one of our people, was charged only Rs. 10. And, subsequently, when he started speaking and had a different accent, he was called back and asked to show his identification. When he could not show an Indian card, he had to pay Rs. 250.

SHRI B.J. PANDA: Indians are repeatedly harassed. Please look into it.

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: I will certainly look into it.

श्री रुद्रनारायण पाणि: सभापति जी धन्यवाद। सेक्युलरिज्म शब्द के भारतीय भाषान्तरण को लेकर अब एक विवाद खड़ा हुआ है। धर्म निरपेक्ष कहा जाएगा कि पंथ निरपेक्ष कहा जाएगा, ऐसा विवाद पुन: चालू हुआ है। सरकार को बाहर से समर्थन देने वाले बड़े नेताओं ने इस प्रकार की बहस राष्ट्रपति जी के अभिभाषण के बाद अब छेड़ी है। ...(**व्यवधान**)...

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Sir, if it is going on record, we also want to put forth our view-point...(*Interruptions*):

श्री सभापति: आप क्वेश्चन कीजिए ...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्री रुद्रनारायण पाणि: महोदय, सेक्युलरिज्मं कहो ...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्री सभापति: आप क्वेश्चन कीजिए, मैं अलाउ नहीं करूंगा ...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्री रुद्रनारायण पाणि: सभापति जी, मैं क्वेश्चन पर आता हूं....(**व्यवधान**)...

श्री सभापति: न आने का सवाल है, न जाने का , come to the question ...(*Interruptions*)...

श्री रुद्रनारायण पाणि: महोदय, सेक्युलरिज्म कहिए, धर्मनिरपेक्ष कहिए ...(**व्यवधान**)...

SHRI MOINUL HASSAN: Sir, it should be expunged from the record. ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will look into the record ....(*Interruptions*)...

श्री सभापति: आप क्वेश्चन नहीं कर रहे हैं, मैं अलाउ नही करूंगा ...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्री एस॰एस॰ अहलुवालिया: यह अनपार्लियामेंट्री नहीं है ...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्री सभापति: अनपार्लियामेंट्री नहीं ...(**व्यवधान**)... क्वेश्चन कर रहे हैं ...(**व्यवधान**)... आप सीधा क्वेश्चन कीजिए ...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्री रुद्रनारायण पाणि: सभापति जी, कोई भी पूजा-पाठ का विरोधी नहीं है। मैंने पहले हाथ उठाया था, लेकिन सत्ता पक्ष की माननीय सदस्या को पहले मौका दिया गया। वे पूजा-पाठ और मंदिर के बारे में अतिरिक्त प्रश्न न पूछें। अक्तूबर में आप उड़ीसा गए थे। तटीय उड़ीसा में तीन ऐसे प्रसिद्ध मंदिर हैं, जिनको स्वर्णिम त्रिकोण कहा जाता है। इनको गोल्डन ट्राई एंगल कहते हैं। भुवनेश्वर में लिंगराज महाप्रभु विराजमान हैं, पुरी में जगन्नाथ महाप्रभु विराजमान हैं, तीसरा कोणार्क है। कोणार्क में सदियों पुराना सूर्य मंदिर हैं। ...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्री सभापति: ठीक है, वह सब जानते हैं ...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्री रुद्रनारायण पाणि: वहां पर पूजा को लेकर विवाद है। मैं आपके माध्यम से मंत्री जी से प्रश्न करना चाहता हूं ...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्री सभापति: मुझ से ही करते हैं आप ...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्री रुद्रनारायण पाणि: मैं आपके माध्यम से मंत्री जी से प्रश्न करना चाहता हूं कि कोणार्क में सूर्य पूजा को लेकर जो विवाद है क्या माननीय मंत्री महोदया को उसके बारे में पता है? माननीय मंत्री महोदया अक्तूबर में उड़ीसा गई थीं। महोदय, अब वहां के ...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्री सभापति: आप क्वेश्चन कीजिए ...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्री रुद्रनारायण पाणि: महोदय, कोणार्क एक छोटा सा टाउन है ...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्री सीताराम येचुरी: महोदय ...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्री रुद्रनारायण पाणि: महोदय, मेरा सवाल है कि कोणार्क एक छोटा-सा टाउन है। आस-पास के गांव के लोग सूर्य पूजा करने के अत्यंत आग्रही हैं, उन्हें इस कानून के आधार पर मारा-पीटा जा रहा है ...(**व्यवधान**)... क्या माननीय मंत्री महोदया को पता है कि वहां पर पूजा को लेकर विवाद है? ...(**व्यवधान**)... सरकार का कोणार्क में पूजा को लेकर क्या दृष्टिकोण है? ...(**व्यवधान**)... दूसरा ...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्री सभापति: आगे नहीं ...(**व्यवधान**)... Please take your seat ...(*Interruptions*)... Nothing will go one record ...(*Interruptions*)... कोई रिकार्ड में नहीं जाएगा ...(**व्यवधान**)... आपको तो क्वेश्चन के लिए खड़ा करना ही मुसीबत है ...(**व्यवधान**)... आप बताइए ...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्रीमती अम्बिका सोनी: सभापति जी, मैंने माननीय सदस्य के विचार सुने हैं, लेकिन उड़ीसा में जो 5 monuments हैं, जिनकी देखरेख ASI करती है, जहां टिकट लगते हैं, उसका इससे कोई संबंध नहीं है, लेकिन अगर कोई और विषय ये उठाना चाहते हैं, तो जरूर मुझसे बात कर सकते हैं।

श्रीमती सुषमा स्वराज: कोणार्क आपके under है या नहीं? वे पूछ रहे हैं कि क्या कोणार्क में आप सूर्य पूजा की इज़ाज़त देंगे? ...(**व्यवधान**)... कोणार्क आपके under है या नहीं? अगर कोणार्क आपके under है, तो वे पूछ रहे हैं कि क्या वहां सूर्य पूजा की इज़ाज़त देंगे? ...(**व्यवधान**)... यही पूछ रहे हैं ...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्री सीताराम येचूरी: यह पाणि जी का सवाल नहीं है, यह आपका सवाल है।

श्रीमती सुषमा स्वराज: उन्होंने यही पूछा है ...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्री सीताराम येचुरी: हम आपको appreciate करते हैं कि आप समझ गईं, हम आपको congratulate करना चाहते हैं कि आप समझ गईं ...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्री सभापति: आप बैठिए ...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्रीमती सुषमा स्वराज: उन्होंने यही पूछा है, यही सवाल पूछा है उन्होंने ...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्री सभापति: पूछा होगा। इंदिरा जी, आप पूछिए।

श्रीमती अम्बिका सोनी: आपके स्पष्टीकरण से पहले ही मैंने उनका सवाल समझ लिया था। उनका सवाल, इस प्रश्न से संबंधित नहीं है। जहां तक पूजा करने की इज़ाज़त देने की बात है, वह अलग प्रश्न है, वे मुझसे बात कर सकते हैं, हमारे जो rules and regulation हैं, वह मैं उनको बता दूंगी ...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्री सभापति: इंदिरा जी, आप पूछिए ...(**व्यवधान**)... अब छोड़िए, कोई रिकॉर्ड नहीं हो रहा है ...(**व्यवधान**)... मैं allow नहीं कर रहा हूं, रिकॉर्ड पर नही जाएगा, ज्यादा अच्छा होगा कि आप बैठ जाएं ...(**व्यवधान**)... इंदिरा जी, आप सवाल पूछिए।

SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Sir, before putting my question, I would like to submit that not only hon. Memebr, Shri V. Narayanasamy, but we must

also be considered to discuss about the cultural and heritage monuments like this. We are talking about the foreign currency and the foreign people who come here, but there are so many heritage sites which are not maintained well. So, I would like to request the hon. Minister that the cultural and heritage sites should be maintained properly because so many foreigners come to see them and, thus, our culture is spread the world over. But, as the hon. Member, Shri V. Narayanasamy said, if these sites are not properly maintained the foreigners, coming to these sites, will carry a bad impression with them to their countries. So, I request the hon. Minister to properly maintain the heritage areas and monuments.

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: Sir, I would like to assure the hon. Member, there is not a question of my taking any single Member's opinion. Whoever is the membr of the Consultative Committee on Tourism and Culture, I definitely take their opionion. (*Interruptions*) And, everybody else's who want to give it (*Interruptions*).

DR. CHANDAN MITRA: Sir, my quesiton to the hon. Minsiter is that in view of the difficultry of proving Indian nationality at the gate of any of the heritage sites -- the point which my colleague, Mr. Panda, has just raised -- I have personally witnessed at various sites, including Taj Mahal, Sikandara, other palces where there is ticketing, regular brawls happen between people who refuse to pay, saying that they are Indians, and others who are Indians, but are harassed for not looking like Indians. If we continue with this system of dual charge, will the hon. Minister consider introducing a system whereby you have to, at least, prove or disprove your nationality with some card system, etc? I would also like to point out that the amount ....(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please put the question.

DR. CHANDAN MITRA: The amount to money through tickets is extremely limited. Since only Rs. 53 crores are collected through ticketing, surely there are other ways of enhancing the amount that is spent on the maintenance. That is where the solution, probably, lies, and not in this dual system of ticketing. I would like to know from the Minister whether a serious thought is being given to this issue at all.

PROF. P.J. KUREIN: Sir, this dual system of ticketing is unnecessary. What mone are we going to get from that? We can do away with that.

SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have already said that it is only a paltry amount considering the larger expenditure on restoration and conservation. Sir, Rs. 53 crores is not a big amount, but even that we do not have access to because it goes to the Consolidated Fund of the Ministry of Finance ..(*Interruptions*).. That is why we are trying to move this private-public partnership concept for preservation of monuments. I would be extremely grateful to all the hon. Members of Parliament if they help the Ministry of Culture and the Archaeological Survey in making this National Culture Fund more popular feature in corporate houses and in all their contracts. If every Member of Parliament gets us one donation, we would be able to do something. ..(*Interruptions*)..

MR. CHAIRMAN: Dr. Karan Singh. ..(*Interruptions*).. Please take your seat. ..(*Interruptions*)..

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: You make that demand; we will support you. ..(*Interruptions*).. Are you making a demand to the Finance Ministry that what you want, you should get? ..(*Interruptions*).. Did you make that demand? We will support you. ..(*Interruptions*)..

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is the last question.

DR. KARAN SINGH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, there are two aspects involved in this question. One is the larger aspect of how we should maintain our archaeological monuments and our world heritage sites and how they should be financed. That is a different matter. That can be discussed and should be discussed because it is a matter of great importance.

The immediate point here is whether there should be a differential rate or not. Now, Sir, when one travels across the world, you have to pay 10—15 dollars to get in anywhere in the world..Why should an American citizen, for example, charge us 15 dollars which is Rs. 700/- to get into the metropolitan museums, then, why should he get in for 20 cents into one of our monuments? I do not agree with this. Sir, I have a difference of opinion. I feel we should have a binary rate. People who have spent lakhs of rupees to buy a ticket to come to India can, surely, spend a few hundred rupees to get into our monuments. So, I am not personally in favour of reducing this binary fee. ..(*Interruptions*)..

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next question. Q.No. 204.